

THE LOTUS GARLAND

Commentary to the Dewachen wishing prayer

by [Karma] Chagme [Rinpoche]¹

[Insertion: The long Dewachen prayer itself is called:

The wishing prayer of Dewachen, the pure realm of great bliss, composed by the learned and accomplished Raga Asye²]

[Insertion: The prayer starts with the following introduction, which is not mentioned in the commentary:

OM AMI DEVA HRI!

This is the treasury of the heart practice of [Karma] Chagme [Rinpoche]. Considering how great the benefit would be for many beings, I make the effort to write, although my hand is sick.

In the case that someone wishes to copy (study and practise) this text and does not have it himself, please lend it to him. Nothing has greater benefit. There is no dharma teaching more profound than this. It is the root of all dharma³. Do not fall into indifference, but take up its practice diligently. Since this text belongs to the sutra tradition you may recite it without receiving a ritual reading transmission (*lung*).]

THE FOUR CAUSES FOR REBIRTH IN DEWACHEN

This wishing prayer of the Land of Great Bliss⁴ has been written by the learned and accomplished Karma Chagme in order that immediately after this life all sentient beings which are equal to space⁵ will be born in the pure world in the West which is Dewachen and finally obtain the state of Buddhahood.

You are now invited to listen to the commentary named "The Lotus Garland" together with supplementary gradual explanations that give the exact meaning of the words one after the other.

Following the Amitabha sutra the points which need to be explained are the four causes for rebirth in Dewachen: to remember the Thus-gone-One [Tathagata Amitabha], to develop roots of virtue, to develop bodhicitta, and to make a complete dedication.

The first cause is to keep in mind the outer aspect of the pure land, the second is, to gather a great accumulation of wholesome acts, the third is to develop the mind of enlightenment, and the fourth cause is to make dedications and wishing prayers to be born in the realm of Great Bliss.

THE FIRST CAUSE: KEEPING IN MIND THE OUTER ASPECT OF THE PURE LAND

The passage to be explained first starts with "E MA HO..." and goes down to "...bright yellow colour" (...ser-tem-me):

E MA HO means "How wonderful!" and refers to the marvellous beauty of the three-thousandfold world system⁶, which is called "The Universe which cannot be distinguished":

From here, in the direction of the setting sun, beyond a multitude of innumerable worlds, slightly elevated, as if a little higher, is the land of the noble beings.⁷

The Buddha Measureless Light⁸ was born in a previous time as the King Who has the Wheel with the Spokes⁹. At that time, in front of the Victorious One, Buddha Jewel Essence¹⁰, he developed for the first time the mind of supreme enlightenment. From then on, he gathered the accumulations which made it possible to manifest the pure land of Dewachen. [He promised:] "I will only become a buddha, if all those who make the prayer to be born in Dewachen will really be able to take birth there. If however they do not have the capacity to be born there, I will not become a completely perfected one (a buddha)." Saying this he made countless prayers.

Finally he perfectly accomplished the prayers and accumulations, and at that time the former King Who has the Wheel with the Spokes became a buddha called Buddha Amitabha (Measureless Light). Since the wishes of the victorious ones are accomplished for all those who make pure aspiration prayers to be born in Dewachen it is actually possible to be reborn there. This is due to the force of the prayers of victorious ones.

One might ask: "What is this world like?" In general (there are four kinds of worlds:)

- If the outer world is pure, made of various jewels, and is inhabited by impure beings with emotions, then it is like the realm of the gods of desire.
- If the outer world appears as impure with earth, stones, mountains, rocks, and so on, and is inhabited by a gathering of wisdom holders, then it is like [the land] Shambhala in the north.
- If the outer world is of burning iron and so on, and its inhabitants suffer from heat, cold, hunger, and thirst, then both, the container and the contents, are impure, just as in the lower realms.
- If however the world which is the outer vessel is pure, a land of jewels, with pure beings as its inhabitants who are noble ones¹¹, then vessel and contents are [just like] the perfectly pure realm of Dewachen.

Although Dewachen is not visible to our human water bubble like eyes, based on hearing and contemplation it can clearly appear to our mind so that one is quite amazed.

If you wonder who lives there: There resides the Subduer and Victorious One¹² Measureless Light who is of ruby red colour and blazing radiance. He is adorned with the top knot on his head, the wheels on his feet and so on, all parts of his body are completely adorned with the 32 signs of perfection, and he is also adorned and dressed with all the secondary attributes, the 80 minor marks. He has a single face, two arms, his hands in the mudra of equanimity, holding an alms bowl filled with nectar. He wears the three dharma robes: below a shamtab¹³, above an upper garment and a gelong zen¹⁴.

With his legs in crossed vajra posture, on a jewel throne in its outer aspect decorated with eight peacocks which are in essence the eight great disciples¹⁵ who offer a seat with their bodies while listening with their ears to the nectar of the Dharma he is seated on an lotus of a thousand petals with a moon disc on which a bodhi tree bearing fruits and made of various jewels serves as a back rest.

From far away, from Dewachen which is at a long distance in the western direction, he looks at me with his eyes of compassion. On his right is the Bodhisattva "Eyes of Compassionate Wisdom" (Avalokiteshvara), of white colour, holding in his left hand a white lotus; and on his left is the Bodhisattva "Great Power" (Vajrapani)¹⁶, of blue body colour, holding in his left hand a lotus marked with a vajra. Both of them extend their right hands towards us in the refuge bestowing mudra. In this way, these three main deities appear like Mount Meru, the king of mountains.¹⁷

Radiant in splendour, their body endowed with the marks and signs of a buddha, their speech pouring forth the splendour of the pleasant melodies of Brahma's speech, and their mind illuminating (the world) with the primordial awareness of knowledge and love.

They dwell accompanied by their retinue, surrounding them, of a trillion gelong bodhisattvas¹⁸, all of them also of golden colour, adorned with the marks and signs, main divinities as well as retinue dressed in the three dharma robes, of great resplendence.

As if they were actually visible and tangible, with intense devotion and fervour, concentrate your mind on Dewachen as if experiencing it. Imagine that you have already been born there and that your prayers are already fulfilled the very moment you recite them. Develop an exulted mind that very instant.

If you make the Dewachen prayers with an inattentive mind like a shepherd who confuses sheep and children, then obstacles will arise. In that case, at the time of death, instead of taking the path to Dewachen, confused appearances of such a kind will arise that again you will fall back [into Samsara]. For this reason, to say it briefly, you should while doing the Dewachen prayer have this feeling to really see and touch¹⁹ Dewachen, as if you were already born there. You should bring forth great enthusiasm and remain non-distracted.

This was the explanation of the first cause: to keep in mind the outer aspect of the pure realm.

THE SECOND CAUSE:

GATHERING THE ACCUMULATIONS THROUGH THE SEVEN BRANCH PRAYER

First branch: Prostrations

In order to make a true dedication, prostrate with respectful devotion in front of Lama Measureless Light together with his retinue residing in Dewachen.

With a devotion that does not make any difference between near and far²⁰, I emanate as many other bodies of mine as there are dust particles in the universe and prostrate full of respect with my three doors.

The explanation of the dharmakaya, the aspect which is basis of emanation:

The Dharmakaya Limitless Radiance²¹, which is the basis of emanation, Lord of the buddha family, emanates from his right hand light rays that become Chenrezi, and from him one billion secondary emanations of the mighty Chenrezi that fill the whole "Three thousandfold Universe which cannot be distinguished". From his left hand he emanates light rays that become Tara with one billion secondary emanations of Tara similar to herself. From his heart light rays go out manifesting Padmasambhava together with one billion secondary emanations of Orgyen²² that fill the three thousandfold universe. I prostrate to all these emanations of Dharmakaya Measureless Light.

With the eyes of a buddha, during all six periods of the day and night, he constantly regards with love all sentient beings. His enlightened mind is constantly aware of whatever thoughts or ideas arise in the mind of all sentient beings. His enlightened ear constantly hears distinctly, without confusion, whatever words are spoken by all sentient beings. Remembering the qualities of the Dharmakaya which is of benefit for oneself I prostrate to the all-knowing Measureless Light.

Remembering the qualities of the form kayas which are for the benefit of others:

a) *Nirmanakaya*: Concerning Dewachen – except for those who have the two kinds of obstacles for rebirth there because they have rejected the noble dharma, saying that teaching and practise are of no use, or who have accomplished the extremely negative deeds of immediate retribution which will be explained below – all others who have faith in You (*Amitabha*) and make their wishing prayers will be born in Dewachen and their prayers will be fulfilled. Because it is like this, it is said that at the time when we have died and wander in the bardo, he (*Amitabha*) will send an emanation together with a retinue which will come towards us, and will guide us in one instant into this land. Remembering his qualities I prostrate to the guide *Nirmanakaya* Measureless Light.

b) *Sambhogakaya*: Your life span lasting for countless kalpas you stay here and do not go beyond suffering. If we pray to you with one pointed respect, it is said that – except for the complete ripening of previous karma – the coming together of the conditions for the end of our life force will happen only after one hundred years and the various kinds of untimely death will be averted. Being aware of qualities as these, I prostrate to the *sambhogakaya* protector *Amitayus* (= *Amitabha*).

Further qualities of his deeds and enlightened activity:

It is said that it is of comparatively greater merit simply to join the palms of one's hands out of faith on hearing the name of *Amitabha* and about Dewachen than to fill the worlds of countless three thousandfold universes of vast extent with all kinds of jewels like gold, silver, and so on and to offer them as gifts. For this reason I respectfully prostrate to Measureless Light.

Whosoever, whatever person or suitable sentient being, hears the name of *Amitabha* and develops just once a faith, which comes from the depth of his heart and bones and is not empty talk, then this faithful one will never lose the path to enlightenment and the extremes of samsara²³ will be transformed. For this reason I prostrate to the protector Measureless Light.

From the time of hearing the name of Buddha Measureless Light until obtaining buddhahood I will not be born in unfavourable conditions like for example as a woman which (due to cultural limitations) was to be considered as an inferior support for practice, but take birth in a good family and have a pure conduct in all lives to come. I prostrate to Measureless Light gone to bliss²⁴. This concludes the branch of prostration.

Second branch: Making offerings

My body and all my possessions, together with my roots of virtue, whatever offerings that are actually present *like ablution water, flowers, incense, lamps, perfumes, food, at least a hundred of all these, or offerings emanated by mind including the eight auspicious substances which are: mirror, sindhura, kusha grass²⁵, conch shell, white mustard, durwa grass,²⁶ and yoghurt, all in limitless kinds, the eight auspicious signs which are the (infinite) knot, white conch, banner of victory, umbrella, vase, lotus, wheel, and sun²⁷, the seven precious items (signifying royalty) which are the wheel (of a universal monarch), jewel, (the earrings of the) queen, (the earrings of the) minister, the (tusks of the) elephant, supreme mount (symbolised by the horn of a unicorn), (the signs of the) general – whatever offerings exist since all times, since the first appearance of the worlds, such as billions of three thousandfold universes with their four continents, the central mountain, the sun and the moon together with all the wealth of gods, nagas²⁸ and humans – I take them up in my mind which means to visualise them very clearly and offer them to Amitabha. By the force of your compassion, accept this for my own benefit.*

This concludes the branch of offering.

Third branch: Confession

I lay open and confess all the non-virtuous deeds which have been committed from beginningless time until now by myself and by all sentient beings headed by my father and mother.

I lay open and confess the three unwholesome acts of the body: killing, taking what is not given, and impure conduct.

I lay open and confess the four unwholesome acts of the speech: lying, slandering, rough speech, and gossip.

I lay open and confess the three unwholesome acts of mind, *all that has been accumulated since beginningless time in samsara: covetousness due to desire, malice due to anger, and (holding on to) wrong views like denying the law of cause and effect or the Three Jewels (which stand for the possibility of enlightenment).*

I lay open and confess *all* the five deeds of immediate retribution which we accumulated *in beginningless samsara: killing our father, our mother, and – in following the way this explanation is given in the Kadampa tradition of Jowo Atisha – our teacher²⁹, or an arhat³⁰, and intending to cause harm to the body of a Victorious One which means actually doing the act without regret of cutting open his body so that blood comes forth. These five are the causes which will result (after death) in immediate rebirth in the Hell of Unspeakable Torment (Avici) without any possibility for other factors to hinder this rebirth.*

I lay open and confess the evil deeds similar to the deeds of immediate retribution: killing a fully ordained monastic or a novice, making a nun or monk fall into lay status (through rape or seduction), destroying a statue, stupa or temple – *except if wanting to repair it – or to unnecessarily destroy holy texts and so on.*

I lay open and confess *all* the evil acts of abandoning the dharma together with everything related to this kind of act like abandoning the three supports etc. *in front of which I have committed myself at the time of taking the vows: the Three Jewels, the temple, and the supreme texts (e.g. the dharma texts) present in front of us.*

To "lay open" means not to keep one's faults secret but to clearly say them. To "confess" means to destroy or sweep them away like dust.

I lay open and confess all these accumulated very negative, useless actions – *which are so useless that one cannot even "fill a glass of water" with them – like abusing bodhisattvas which is of greater evil than to kill the sentient beings of the three realms³¹. In general one should, whenever talking about lamas and ordained ones, be aware that there are probably bodhisattvas among them.*

Compared to the five crimes of immediate retribution it is more negative not to believe in the benefits of virtuous deeds and the difficulties resulting from non-virtue *about which we have heard* and to think that these *as well as similar teachings* are simply a pedagogical device, and this although we received explanations *by a lama* on the duration and extent of suffering in the hell realms, and so on. I lay open and confess this negative karma that makes liberation impossible.

This was the general confession of faults.

Now comes the more specific confession concerning transgressions of the vows of individual liberation, the bodhisattva vows and the tantric vows. Among these three, [transgressions of] the outer³² vows of individual liberation about what is to be given up are considered the roots of all faults and transgressions. They include: to take life, to steal, to have impure relationships with a woman (or man), to tell lies like pretending to have clairvoyance.

I lay open and confess all breakage and damages of the discipline of individual liberation including the five categories of faults³³: the four root downfalls, in short: killing, stealing, impure conduct, and lying, these are what one should keep in mind and protect oneself from, since they are the principal transgressions – if they occur, one is not a follower of the Buddha's teaching any more. Furthermore there are the thirteen [transgressions of vows] with a remainder, the thirty transgressions which are like downfalls, the ninety downfalls, the four individually confessed damages, and the hundred and twelve faults.

I lay open and confess the acts which we should give up once having requested the bodhisattva vows: the four negative actions³⁴ which damage (these vows), as well as the root downfalls which actually break the vows: the five which concern "kings" – referring to bodhisattvas who have obtained a power and influence similar to a great ruler, and the five similar ones of "ministers" who are executing the orders of a king and acting on his behalf, and to these are added the eight transgressions of ordinary beings in the bodhisattva family which (also) constitute a major breakage. Together they are counted as eighteen root downfalls. If they occur, they constitute a spoiling of our training in bodhicitta: you should protect yourself from them, if any of those present themselves.

The four negative actions [in relation to the bodhisattva vows] which should be given up are:

- to cheat the lama
- to employ means to make someone regret the dharma (or any dharmic activity),
- to slander the superior ones³⁵,
- to have a tricky mind which cheats the inferior ones [the ones who depend on us].

The eighteen root downfalls of a bodhisattva are:

- The five concerning a king (or powerful person) are: (1) to steal the wealth of the [Three] Jewels³⁶, (2) to [cause someone to] abandon the dharma, (3) to strike and punish a monk or nun who have become a lay person [due to having lost their discipline], (4) to commit one of the five crimes with immediate retribution, (5) to have erroneous views and to deny [the law of] cause and effect.
- Of the five downfalls for a minister the first four are the same as above (counted as 6–9), but instead of wrong views we find (10) destroying a town (or country) with an army.
- The eight principal transgressions of ordinary people (practising the bodhisattva path) are: (11) to teach emptiness to those whose mind is not prepared, (12) to create obstacles for the dharma [practice] of the great vehicle, (13) to (make someone) engage in the Mahayana while giving up the self liberation vows, (14) to instigate others to abandon the dharma of the smaller vehicle³⁷, (15) to denigrate others in order to obtain praise and fame, (16) to lie saying that one has realised emptiness when one has not, (17) to pass on the donations given to the [Three] Jewels to someone who is not worthy to receive them, (18) to take away the provisions of a meditator who then has to abandon [his practice of] meditative absorption and to give them to someone who is just doing recitations without faith.

These are the eighteen root downfalls concerning the [bodhisattva] vows. If such a transgression has occurred, one will fall into Avici, the hell of unspeakable torment. (In order to purify these acts) confess these downfalls again and again in front of the bodhisattva Akashagarbha (Namkai Nyimpö³⁸) and promise to keep the vows. In brief, you should never even abandon someone whom you consider as an enemy, (but remain open for when) the time will come that he needs your help. With this attitude I lay open and confess all the transgressions as explained concerning the bodhisattva training.

The confession of transgressions concerning the vows of the tantrayana³⁹:

These vows should not be explained in public or to unprepared, feeble minded people. You should keep them secret in your mind. The 14 root downfalls of the mantrayana are:

- (1) to disrespect the lama, (2) to transgress the Buddha's word, (3) to be angry at one's [vajra] brothers and sisters, (4) to give up love and (5) to give up bodhicitta, (6) to disrespect (non-buddhist) spiritual teachings, (7) to disclose secrets (of the vajrayana transmission), (8) to despise the 5 aggregates⁴⁰, (9) to disbelieve pure dharmas⁴¹,

(10) to have love for malicious ones⁴², (11) to apply discursive concepts to what is free⁴³, (12) to create regret in those who have faith, (13) not to rely on samaya substances⁴⁴, (14) to disrespect women (or men).

If you keep the tantric vows, they will be the root of all accomplishments. If you damage them, they are the root of all faults and downfalls. Pledging to them, they are the root of all samayas. That is why they are [called] the 14 root downfalls of the mantrayana.

The [transgressions of the] eight secondary vows are:

(1) to rely on a wisdom lady (or partner) who is not mature, (2) to quarrel at the time of the tsog gathering, (3) to accept nectar with improper characteristics⁴⁵, (4) not to teach the secret mantra to those who are fitting vessels, (5) not to teach the noble dharma to those who have faith⁴⁶, (6) to stay seven days together with a shravaka who is striving towards personal benefit⁴⁷, (7) to boast about being a "tantrika" while not having the primordial awareness of the yoga⁴⁸, (8) to explain the dharma to unfit vessels. These are the secondary tantric vows.

For this reason I lay open and confess the samaya damages of the secret mantra: the 14 root downfalls of the mantrayana, and the transgressions of the eight secondary vows.

I lay open and confess all harmful deeds which I did not understand to be harmful: the non-virtuous deeds that I have committed due to not requesting vows and all evil deeds of which I was not aware of as actually being harmful, like impure conduct (sexual activity), drinking alcohol and so on *due to desire*.

I lay open and confess the serious transgressions and downfalls due to receiving the refuge of a genyen⁴⁹, vows, initiations and so on, but not knowing to keep the respective vows and commitments.

Since a confession will not purify if there is no regret, I confess with great remorse, with shame, and with despair at my previous harmful deeds, as if poison had attained the depth of my being. *This is applying the "force of repentance" in relation to our previous acts.*

Since there will be no purification if I am not keeping to my vows from now on, I promise in my mind, from today onwards, never to commit non-virtuous activity even at the cost of my life. *This is applying the "force of renunciation" by keeping the vows present in our mind from now on. For a true confession these two [forces] are very important.*

Please, Sugata Measureless Light and your heirs, grant your blessing so that my stream of being may be completely purified.

This concludes the branch of confession.

Fourth branch: Rejoicing

When I hear about others who have accomplished wholesome acts, *like spreading the teaching of the victorious ones and erecting supports of enlightened body, speech and mind etc.*, I abandon all unwholesome thoughts of jealousy and rejoice in their deeds with heartfelt joy, which is said to make us *progressively* obtain a merit equal to theirs.

A previous Buddha together with his retinue was invited by a king for a meal. At that occasion, when he was requested to dedicate the roots of virtue, the Buddha said: "Great King, since your aspiration to perform virtuous deeds is small, the roots of virtue [of this feast] will be obtained by this old mother next to you who really rejoices."

For this reason, *since it is like this*, I rejoice in whatever virtuous deeds are accomplished by realised and ordinary beings.

I also rejoice in the vast activity accomplished for the benefit of beings due to developing the mind of supreme unsurpassable enlightenment.

I rejoice in giving up the ten unwholesome and performing the ten wholesome acts: *the three virtuous acts with the body which are to protect the life of others, to give offerings, and to keep one's vows; the four virtuous acts with speech which are to speak the truth, to reconcile adversaries, to speak peacefully, gently and sincerely, and to engage in conversations which are meaningful; and the four virtuous acts with the mind which are to have little desire, to cultivate love and compassion and to give up erroneous views (like for example) about acts and their consequences (karma) which make dharma practice impossible and to practise the Dharma – in all these virtuous acts I rejoice.*

Fifth branch: Requesting to turn the Wheel of Dharma

I exhort all those perfect buddhas who dwell in all the myriad worlds of the ten directions to quickly and extensively turn the wheel of dharma without waiting any longer. *Praying like this:* Please be aware of this request with your clairvoyant mind.

Sixth branch: Praying that the buddhas may not pass beyond suffering

I supplicate all the buddhas, bodhisattvas, holders of the teaching, and spiritual friends who intend to go beyond suffering to remain and not pass into nirvana.

Seventh branch: Dedication

On the basis of this very act, I dedicate all virtuous acts of the three times for the benefit of all sentient beings. *Dedicating the roots of virtue in this way will multiply the virtue a hundred thousand times.*

THE THIRD CAUSE: DEVELOPING THE MIND OF SUPREME ENLIGHTENMENT

May all of us, *myself and other sentient beings*, be liberated from samsara and quickly obtain unsurpassable enlightenment, thus stirring the three realms of samsara from their depth.

May these virtuous deeds quickly ripen for me and pacify the eighteen causes of untimely death in this life *such as being killed through fire, water, poison, arms, evil-doers, wild animals and so on.*

May I be endowed with the physical strength of a healthy adolescent in full bloom.

May the wealth *that is in accordance with the dharma* never decline, but increase as the river Ganges in the monsoon.

May I practise the noble dharma without danger through demons or enemies.

May all my wishes be fulfilled in accordance with the dharma.

May I be of great benefit for the teaching and for beings.

May I accomplish the true meaning of this human existence.

This concludes the (teaching on the) third cause.

THE FOURTH CAUSE: MAKING DEDICATIONS AND WISHES TO BE BORN IN DEWACHEN

a) Wishes to go to Dewachen

At the very moment when I and all those who have a connection with me pass beyond this life, may the emanation of Buddha Amitabha surrounded by his retinue of a sangha of practitioners of virtue actually come to meet us *without any (of the common) bardo appearances.*

On seeing him, may our mind be happy and joyful, and may there be no more suffering of death.

May *at the time of our death* by the force of their miraculous powers the eight bodhisattva brothers appear in the sky *in front*, and guide us indicating the path to Dewachen.

To be attached to wealth and relatives at that time would make me fall back into samsara. To avoid this reflect on non-attachment: The suffering in the lower realms is unbearable, and the joy and well-being of gods and humans is impermanent – understanding this, may I develop a fearful mind and *right now* develop disgust with samsara that had to be endured from beginningless time until now.

Even those who go from one supreme human life to another experience countless times *(the sufferings of)* birth, old age, illness and death. In these difficult, degenerate times when there are many obstacles and the well-being and happiness of humans and gods are similar to food mixed with poison, may I have not even a hair tip of attachment.

May I be free of even the slightest attachment to *the* relatives, food, wealth and companions *of this life*, which are impermanent and illusory like a dream.

May I understand *the* countries, places and lodgings *of this life* to have no real existence just like the places and houses in my dreams.

Like a criminal liberated from prison, may I – without ever looking back – *at the time of death* escape from this ocean of samsara that knows no freedom to the pure realm of Dewachen.

Having cut all links of attachment and desire, may I fly off in space just like a vulture freed from a net and instantly reach Dewachen travelling beyond the countless universes in the Western direction.

b) Wishes for our practice in Dewachen

Having managed to reach Dewachen without obstacles: May I see the face of Buddha Measureless Light who is actually dwelling there and purify all my veils.

May I take the superior of the four kinds of birth *which are: birth from an egg, from a womb, from warmth and moisture, and miraculous (instantaneous) birth*, and be miraculously born from the heart of a lotus flower.

Obtaining in one instant the completely perfect body, may I receive a body endowed with all the marks and the signs *(of a Buddha)*.

If *now* I doubt and hesitate *wondering, if I am* to be born there *in Dewachen*, the blossom of the flower will not open for up to 500 years, but inside of it I will be happy and content with all enjoyments. Even though I will hear the word of the Buddha, may this disadvantage of delayed meeting with the Buddha's face not happen to me.

Since we might not yet be a (realised) bodhisattva the very moment we are born inside the flower, relying on the teachings of the Buddha (Amitabha), we make the following prayer to obtain the pristine awareness of a Noble One⁵⁰: May the flower open as soon as I am born so that I may see the face of Amitabha.

By the force of my merit and magical powers, may inconceivable clouds of offerings emanate from the palms of my hands as offerings to the Buddha and his retinue.

May at that moment the tathagata stretch out his right hand, place it on my head, and may I obtain his prophecy of enlightenment: *"In the future you will obtain complete enlightenment."*

Having listened to the Dharma, which is profound *in view* and vast *in conduct*, may my mind ripen and be liberated.

Chenrezi and Vajrapani being the principal bodhisattvas *(of Amitabha's retinue)*, may I be blessed and guided by these two.

Every day countless buddhas and bodhisattvas *from the realms* of the ten directions come to make offerings and see Amitabha in this land. At that time, *when they arrive*, may I *myself* pay homage to all of them and obtain the nectar of the dharma.

c) Wishes concerning how our qualities manifest in Dewachen

Through my limitless magical powers, *which are present, if one succeeds in being born in Dewachen*, may I go in the morning – *when the birds start singing and a great rain of flowers is showered down by the wind* – towards the realm of True Happiness *in the Eastern direction*, to the Glorious Land *in the South*, to [the lands] Supreme Activity *in the North*, and Dense Array *in the Centre*. May I request initiations, blessings and vows of the buddhas Akshobya, Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi, Vairocana etc. *who dwell in those realms*, make many offerings, and in the evening – *when the birds stop singing and the flower rain has become old* – without any effort return *back* to Dewachen itself.

There are a billion realms of pure emanations – such as the lands of Potala *in the South*, Alakavati *in the North*, Kurava *in the Southwest*, and the land of Ugyen *in the West* – with a billion *(emanations of)* Chenrezi, Tara, Vajrapani, and Padmasambhava *who reside in those lands*. May I encounter them and make oceans of offerings, request initiations and profound pith instructions, and *then again* quickly return without any obstacle to my place in Dewachen.

When we have succeeded to take birth in Dewachen: May I clearly see with my divine eye all the close friends, monks and students and so on *whom I have just left behind in the human realm*, and may I be able to guard and protect *all of them*, bestow blessings and at the time of their death guide them to this land.

This "Fortunate Aeon" *right now* that lasts for one *great* aeon equals only a single day in Dewachen – may I live countless Dewachen aeons without ever dying and continuously remain in this land.

From Maitreya (*the next buddha*) to Mōpa (*Thaye*), the final one of all the buddhas who will come one after the other one into the fortunate kalpa of this present world, may I see all the buddhas of the Fortunate Aeon when they appear in this world.

With my magical powers, may I go from Dewachen to meet these buddhas, make offerings to them and listen to the noble dharma, and then again, without any obstacles, return to the pure land of Dewachen.

To be born in Dewachen is similar to the capacity to be born in all other pure realms, since Dewachen unites the totality of all qualities of the buddha realms of eighty one billion trillion buddhas. May I be reborn in this land of Dewachen, outstandingly supreme among all pure lands.

This concludes the explanation on how we obtain the qualities after having managed to be born in this pure land.

d) Wishes in relation to the outer qualities of this realm

The ground which is made of various jewels is as smooth as the palm of a hand and vast, spacious and radiant – blazing with light rays. When it is pressed down (*on walking*), it gives way *four fingers deep each time*, and on lifting up (*one's foot*), it is as if the ground rebounds. May I be reborn in this joyful, pleasant land of happiness.

There are wish fulfilling trees made of many jewels with leaves of fine silk and fruits ornamented with jewels. On them gather flocks of emanation birds, which are very beautiful in their colours of various kinds of jewels and chant in very agreeable and pleasant ways, proclaiming the sounds of the profound and vast dharma – may I be reborn in this land of great wonders.

The many rivers, *all water currents*, are of perfumed water with the eight qualities⁵¹ and the water in the bathing ponds is of nectar *turning in circular movement*. They are surrounded by stairs and cornices made of the seven kinds of jewels and display *inside* fragrant lotus flowers bearing fruit and emanating countless rays of lotus light. The tips of the light rays are adorned with emanated buddhas – may I be reborn in this land of greatest marvel.

e) Wishes for our practice of the dharma

May I be born in this Land of Great Joy, where even the words "eight unfitting conditions" for dharma practice, like being reborn in the hell realms and so on, or "hell" are unheard of – even on searching we would not find them – and where never any suffering is known, neither are the five or three emotions that are like poisons – desire, anger and ignorance making three, plus pride and jealousy – nor the 404 kinds of sickness, mental illness, enemies, poverty, quarrels, and so on.

May I be born in this land of limitless qualities where there are *no ordinary beings*, no men or women, no beings born from a womb, since all are noble beings born from within lotus flowers. Here *in this land* all bodies of myself and others are without any difference, of golden colour, endowed with the marks and signs (*of a buddha*), like the topknot on their head and so on, possessing all five special powers – the capacities of clairvoyance, clairaudience, performing miracles, remembering previous existences, and knowing the mind of others – and the five eyes – the physical eye, the divine eye, the eye of the dharma, the wisdom eye, and the eye of pristine awareness.

Whatever I desire and think of, palaces, *all houses and dwelling places in this land*, made of a variety of jewels and all enjoyments arise by themselves; no effort is necessary, all needs are spontaneously fulfilled. There is no distinction between you and me, no clinging to a self. All my wishes manifest as offering clouds arising from the palm of my hand, and everyone practises the dharma of the unsurpassable Great Vehicle – may I be born in this realm, source of all bliss and happiness.

A fragrant breeze *again and again* brings great showers of flowers, and *time after time* from the trees, rivers and lotus flowers arise heaps of clouds with all sorts of enjoyments: agreeable shapes, sounds, smells, tastes and touches. There are no women, but an abundance of emanated goddesses. These many offering goddesses continuously present offerings *to me and others*.

At the time when I wish to stay somewhere, jewel palaces appear, and when I wish to sleep, beautiful thrones arise, covered with many pillows and cushions of fine silk *to place my head*, together with birds, wish fulfilling trees, rivers, music, and so on. When I wish to listen to them, they emanate the pleasant sound of dharma, and when I do not want *to hear them, because I wish to sleep or to meditate in samadhi*, no sound, *not even the slightest*, is heard. Also the ponds and rivers are exactly as I wish, cold or warm, just as it is pleasing to me – may I be born in this land where all wishes are fulfilled.

f) Wishes concerning the activity of the buddhas in Dewachen

You might wonder, for how long Amitabha will remain in this land? The perfect buddha Measureless Light will remain in this land for countless aeons, without going into Nirvana – may I act as his servant *and helper* for all this time.

Until his *final* passing into peace *when his enlightened body enters nirvana*, after two times the number of aeons as there are sand particles in the Ganges, his teaching will *not decline but remain*. At that time may I *myself* not be separated from his (*Amitabha's*) regent Chenrezi and uphold the noble dharma.

When at dusk the sun of the dharma is setting, *which means that the teaching period of Amitabha reaches its end as if it became evening for beings*, the very next morning – *as if it was the break of the next day*⁵² – will arise the time of Chenrezi's teaching and Chenrezi will be a perfect buddha *and act as such*. He will be named the "King whose light rays manifest the accumulated Splendour of all Noble Ones"⁵³. When this happens, may I see his face *and worship him*, make offerings and listen to the noble dharma.

During the sixty-six trillion million aeons that he, *the Buddha "King of accumulated Splendour"*, will live, may I continuously be his servant, *offering my services in every way*, worship him and uphold the noble dharma without ever forgetting to remember his words.

After he, *the enlightened body of Buddha Accumulated Splendour*, has passed into nirvana, his teaching will remain for three times six hundred billion million aeons – may I uphold the *noble* dharma during all this time and never be separated from *his regent the bodhisattva Vajrapani*.

When *the bodhisattva Vajrapani* becomes the buddha called "Completely reliable Tathagata King of abundant jewel-like qualities" with a life span and teaching just as those of Chenrezi, may we (!) continuously be the servants of this buddha as well, present our offerings and uphold all the noble dharma.

When, *at the end of this period*, that form of my presence is over, may I instantly obtain unsurpassable perfect buddhahood in this or one of the other pure realms.

Having obtained perfect buddhahood, may all beings – just as with Amitayus – be ripened and liberated by simply hearing my name, and may there arise, through countless emanations that guide sentient beings and through other means, spontaneously and without effort a limitless benefit for beings.

Again, [an explanation of the benefits of] paying respect to Lama Amitabha and his retinue while remembering their kindness: The buddha's life span *is beyond measure*, his merit *is beyond measure*, his qualities *are beyond measure*, and his pristine awareness as well as his splendour are beyond measure, and it is said that someone *whosoever* remembers his name – be it Dharmakaya Limitless Radiance, Measureless Light (Amitabha) or Bhagavan of Immeasurable Life and Primordial Wisdom (Amitayus) – will be protected against all dangers through fire, water, poisons, weapons, evil doers, demons, and so on, with the only exception of the full (*unavoidable*) ripening of previous karma. By remembering Your name and prostrating, please protect us from all dangers and sufferings and grant your blessing of excellent auspiciousness.

g) Concluding wishes

Proclaiming the words of truth as part of doing wishing prayers: Through the blessing of the Buddha who has mastered the three bodies, through the blessing of the unchanging truth of the nature of all things (dharmata), and through the blessing of the undivided aspiration of the sangha, may all prayers be accomplished just as wished. I prostrate to the Three Jewels. TEYATHA PENTSAN DRIYA AWA BHODHANAYE SOHA.

This concludes the practice of the wishing prayer.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS AND COLOPHON

I prostrate to the three jewels. *We recite these words from 'I prostrate...' till '...shriye soha'. When reciting NAMO MANJUSHRIYE we join our hands and clearly imagine that we prostrate with the body so that this body becomes the ground which is the basis of Manjushri. When saying NAMO SUSHRIYE we prostrate so that our speech becomes the ground for the splendour of bliss. Saying NAMO UTAMA SHRIYE SOHA we prostrate so that our mind become the splendour of the guru's mind.*

As we proclaim this meaningful mantra, making three prostrations, it is said that they are multiplied a million times. At best one does hundreds of prostrations, with an average motivation one does as much as one can, but at least one should offer seven prostrations. The best would be to recite this Dewachen prayer without interruption as a daily practice, a middling version would be to recite it for one year or one month without interruption, and the least would be to recite it occasionally. If one turns towards the West and remembers the pure land of Dewachen while joining one's hands towards Amitabha and reciting the prayer with one-pointed faith, then there is no doubt that obstacles to one's present life will be dispelled and that in the future one will be reborn in Dewachen. This is what is expressed in the Amitabha Sutra, the Pure Land Sutra, the White Lotus Sutra, the [sutra]"Sound of the drum of immortality", and so on. This was composed by the monk Raga Asye [Karma Chagme].

May it serve as a cause for the rebirth in Dewachen of many sentient beings! This perfectly concludes the explanation.

At the end (of the prayer) one should dwell without any reference point, and then make dedications, wishing prayers and prayers of auspiciousness as the final ornament of one's practice. It is very important to continuously purify the realm⁵⁴, to connect with it and in this way train oneself in the pure vision of remembering this pure land.

A supplementary wish: May all beings be liberated into the lotus family by clearly rejoicing in the name of the lotus, the aspiration path to the land of the lotus arrangement, where the regents of the lotus proclaim all kinds of excellent dharma.

Lama Pe-tse and the novice Lobzang Könchog have encouraged and incited me together with Droza Tashi Tsekyi, thus creating a favourable occasion where the conditions came together to compose the second text to accomplish this pure land, the prayer text of the practice itself. Then, although he was already engaged in other activities like explaining and listening to the dharma, Pema Namgyal who is holding the vows brought forth the superior motivation and wrote down this text. May all virtue increase!

Notes:

1 *Square brackets* [...] indicate missing words added for the understanding of the text; *normal brackets* (...) indicate additional explanations given by Lama Lhundrup. Everything written in *italics* belongs to the commentary (small Tibetan script in the original) and everything in normal script is part of the prayer itself (larger Tibetan script).

2 *Raga Asye* is another name for Karma Chagme Rinpoche

3 *All dharma* or all my dharma teaching, since in one Tibetan version the texts reads: nga-yi chös.

4 *Dewachen* in Tibetan is alternatively spelled bde-ba-can or bde-ba-chen and is thus translated either as the *Land of Bliss* or the *Land of Great Bliss*.

5 *Equal to space* means that sentient beings are countless and that all space of the universe is inhabited by sentient beings.

6 *A three-thousandfold world system*, a trichiliocosm, is a universe of 1.000.000.000 planetary systems (one thousand multiplied by one thousand multiplied by one thousand).

7 In this auto-commentary Karma Chagme Rinpoche gives each word of the whole prayer text (normal script) and interposes his explanations of varying length (*italics*) while uniting prayer and commentary into one grammatical structure. This is a the traditional Tibetan way of giving a word by word commentary.

8 The activity of *Buddha Measureless Light* (Tibetan: Öpame, Sanskrit: Amitabha) is the source and central inspiration of the pure realm called Dewachen.

9 *The King who has the Wheel with the Spokes*, Tibetan: Gyalpo Tsib-kyi Mu-khyü-chen.

10 *Buddha Jewel Essence*, Tibetan: Rinchen Nyingpo.

11 *Noble ones* (Sanskrit: Aryas) refers to realised beings that understand the nature of mind.

12 *Subduer* (Sanskrit: Bhagavan), *Victorious One* (Sanskrit: Jina).

13 *Shamtab*: a robe covering the lower part of the body.

14 *Upper garment* refers to large saffron yellow cotton cloth wound around the shoulders (a getsul zen, Tibetan: bla-gos), sign of the novice ordination. A *gelong zen* is an almost identical yellow cloth which is the sign of the full ordination as a buddhist monk (Tibetan: snam-sbyar).

15 The *eight great disciples* of Buddha Shakyamuni (Tibetan: nye-bai-sräs-chän-bgyäd) are his most eminent bodhisattva disciples: Manjushri, Vajrapani (Thu-thob-chen), Avalokiteshvara (Chenrezi), Kshitigarbha, Sarvanirvana Viskambhin, Akashagarbha, Maitreya, and Samantabhadra,

16 Both bodhisattvas are standing next to Amitabha's throne.

17 To describe them as being like the *king of mountains* means that they are towering, unshakeable, and indestructible.

18 *Gelong bodhisattvas* have taken the full monk or nun vows as an expression of their bodhisattva commitment.

19 There are two spellings in different Tibetan texts: "reg" meaning to *touch*, and "rig" meaning to *know*.

20 This means without considering Amitabha to be far away and wishing that he would be nearer by.

21 *Limitless Radiance* (Tibetan: Nangwa Thayä) is another name of Amitabha.

22 *Padmasambhava* and *Orgyen Rinpoche* are further names of Guru Rinpoche who was the central figure in bringing the dharma to Tibet.

23 The *extremes of samsara* are all forms of clinging to existence, non-existence and so on.

24 Someone *gone to bliss* (Sanskrit: sugata) is a fully accomplished buddha.

25 In the usual list we find the bilwa fruit instead of *kusha grass*.

26 The list usually includes at this place a medicine made from *elephant brain*.

27 The Tibetan text has nyi-ma which means *sun*, but usually there would be nya-ma, fish, which stands for two golden fishes.

28 *Nagas* are beings of the animal realm, some of which have half human, half fish or serpent form.

29 In the usual list of the 5 extreme crimes of immediate retribution one includes *creating a schism in the sangha* instead of *killing the teacher*.

30 *Arhat* stands here for any realised being including bodhisattvas.

31 *Three realms* refers to the desire, form and formless realms which together make up the whole universe.

32 The self liberation vows are called *outer* vows because they concern the outer level of our existence, our visible behaviour.

33 The following *five categories* are a summarised list of transgressions of the vows of buddhist monks.

34 The *four negative actions* are called the four "black dharmas" in Tibetan. They are explained in the next paragraph.

35 *The superior ones* are bodhisattvas and all the people who have taught us : our parents, teachers, etc.

36 *To steal the wealth of the jewels* is for example misusing donations given to a community of practitioners or to destroy and rob the precious items found in a temple or monastery etc.

37 For example by claiming that the smaller vehicle does not lead to liberation from emotions.

38 *Akashagarbha* is one of the eight bodhisattvas belonging to the sangha of the Buddha. Here he represents this sangha.

39 *Tantrayana*, mantrayana and vajrayana are synonyms. The explanations given here belong more specifically to the anuttara yoga tantra, the highest form of tantra.

40 *To despise the five aggregates* means to despise one's body and mind.

- ⁴¹ *To disbelieve pure dharmas* : the Tibetan word *chö* also means *phenomena*, so this can also mean to regard phenomena as impure when, in the tantra, they are considered as being pure by nature.
- ⁴² *To have love for malicious ones* means to engage in close friendship with people whose views are against the dharma and who intend to harm.
- ⁴³ One should not *apply discursive concepts* on what is free of them by nature, on ultimate truth for example.
- ⁴⁴ *Not to rely on samaya substances* means not to accept even a tiny bit of a tsog substance because of for example a personal dietary choice against meat or alcohol.
- ⁴⁵ *To accept dütsi with improper characteristics* means dütsi which is received from an improper consort.
- ⁴⁶ *Not to teach the dharma* also means not to answer to sincere questions on the dharma, but to turn them into derision.
- ⁴⁷ *To stay seven days together with a shravaka who is striving towards a personal benefit* is a transgression because one might be influenced to rely on a lower vehicle; also the shravaka might be disturbed in his practice.
- ⁴⁸ *Yoga* refers here to the union of wisdom and means.
- ⁴⁹ *Genyen* means *friend of virtue* and refers to the first level of vows of a lay practitioner.
- ⁵⁰ *A noble One* is here a bodhisattva on the first level of enlightenment (bhumi) which is equivalent to the full entry into Dewachen.
- ⁵¹ The *eight qualities* of pure water are: sweet, refreshing, mild, light, clear, pure, agreeable to the throat and to the stomach.
- ⁵² This image of the *dusk* of Amitabha's teaching immediately followed by the *dawn* of Chenrezi's teaching means that there will be no night, no extinction of the teaching.
- ⁵³ In Tibetan: Öser Kün-nas Pagpayi Paltsek Gyalpo
- ⁵⁴ *To continuously purify the realm* means to make more and more pure aspirations.